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RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

Brian R Naranjo 01/14/2002 10:32:07 AM From DB/Inbox: Brian R Naranjo

Cable Text:  
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TELEGRAM

January 10, 2002

To: SECSTATE WASHDC - ROUTINE  
Action: WHA  
From: AMEMBASSY CARACAS (CARACAS 48 - ROUTINE)  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, SOCI, KPAO, VE  
Captions: None  
Subject: CHAVEZ UNPLUGGED  
Ref: CARACAS 3704

Chron-in

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR DONNA J. HRINAK. REASONS 1.5  
(B & D).

REF: CARACAS 3704

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a nationally televised speech on January 9, President Hugo Chavez both defended the right of a mob to block the entrance to the daily El Nacional and attacked the Metropolitan Police's intervention as creating an atmosphere of instability. He then went on to swear in his two new secretaries of education while pledging to convert the presidential palace of Miraflores into a popular "Bolivarian" University. His defense of the mob ran counter to statements by several top government officials--including Libertador Mayor and sometimes street fighter Freddy Bernal--who are trying to distance themselves from the attack on press freedom.

END SUMMARY.

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THE POLICE ARE TO BLAME  
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2. (U) In a nationally televised speech on January 9, President Hugo Chavez both defended the right of a mob to block the entrance to the daily El Nacional and attacked the Metropolitan Police's intervention as creating an atmosphere of instability. He said to his supportive audience at the Teresa Carreno Theater that he would not tolerate further disruptions in the public order by the police, although he stopped short of defining what actions he would take. His defense of Monday's mob ran counter to statements by several top government officials--including Libertador Mayor and sometimes street fighter Freddy Bernal--who are trying to distance themselves from attacks on press freedom.

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NEW MINISTERS INTRODUCED, NEW UNIVERSITY PROCLAIMED  
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3. (U) Chavez also used this occasion to introduce his new cabinet ministers: Hector Navarro as Minister of Higher Education, and Aristobulo Isturiz as Minister of Education. Navarro took the podium and praised his own efforts in establishing over 2,000 "Bolivarian" schools (almost certainly an exaggerated figure), intervening in the affairs of private universities,

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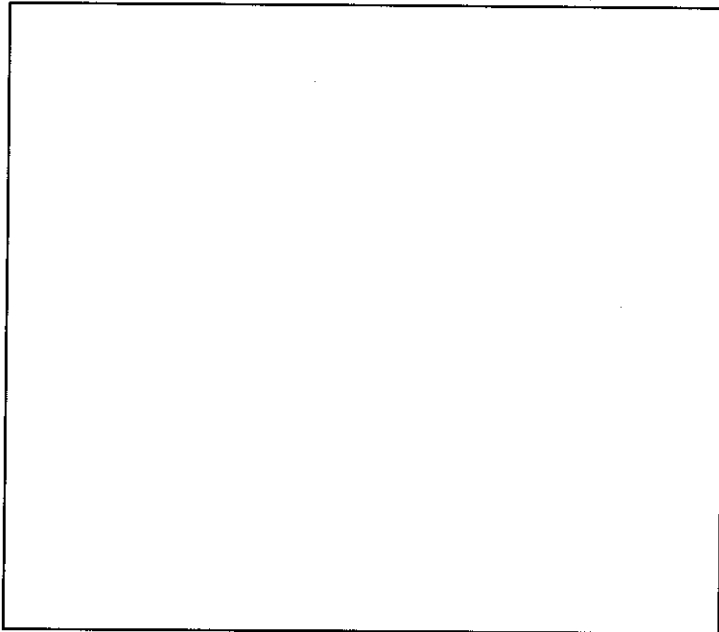
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS  
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and setting a goal to eliminate "inequities in university admissions." When Chavez took back the microphone, he launched into a tirade about university admission standards that accepted only "one in a hundred" poor students. To correct this, he pledged to found a "Popular Bolivarian University" open to all, with the presidential palace of Miraflores serving as its campus.



B1

HRINAK

Additional Addressees:  
None

cc:

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
USINT HAVANA

Distribution:

TED5420  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	SRPP-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/005W		

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/08  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, SOCI, KPAO, VR  
SUBJ: CHAVEZ UNPLUGGED

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End Cable Text

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